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Strategies for Implementing Social Change

Albert Rose



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STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL CHANGE

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The Inevitable Problem -- Definition

The essence of "social change" might be expressed as "society and human relationships in the process of movement from one state of being to another". But this neat definition suggests a slow and deliberate evolution appropriate to a rural or pre-industrial society. It is not suitable in the modern industrial urban society, since the words convey little of the rapidity, abruptness, and revolutionary character of contemporary change. Nor can any definition depict the critical nature of the issues which arise from man's apparent inability to control the scope and pace of social change so that it may be directed towards the meeting of human need.

It is clear that much of the most significant movement in Western society during the middle third of the twentieth century was neither willed nor promoted directly by any level of government. The most important elements in contemporary social change are, surely, the growth of population and its composition; urbanization; the status of children, women, and elderly people in the modern urban society; and the emergence of the "socially responsible state". It can be argued only tenuously that government has been responsible for the fantastic change in the growth and distribution of population in Western countries during the last 25 years. Those of us who were raised within the economic and statistical framework of the 1920's and 1930's can well remember the projections based upon Raymond Pearl's "S-Shaped Curve", which indicated not merely a flattening of the rate of population growth by the 1940's but thereafter, indeed, an absolute decrease in the populations of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, and other Western nations. It is now clear that there are fashions within family growth and development that were barely conceived of thirty years ago and that these fashions, and the higher incomes required to support them, underlie many of the major trends in social development which concern us today. One could argue that indirectly government played a role in the growth of population through its programs of public health, immunization, education, and nutrition, all of which were instrumental in both reducing infant mortality and expanding the span of life. One can accept this and yet term the role of government unwitting.

Urbanization, too, can be seen as an indirect consequence of government policies, particularly, since 1945, in the field of housing, but the objective of one governmental program after another was not to promote the social change that we may describe loosely as urbanization, but to proceed, in part, towards the objective of a decent home for every American or Canadian family. Twenty years later everyone who thinks about the matter knows that the insured mortgage programs of the United States Housing Acts and the National Housing Acts in Canada are responsible, perhaps more than any other factor, for promoting the phenomenon of suburbanization and metropolitan growth. Admittedly, no one can argue that urbanization and population growth are not closely connected yet, without the fillip of large mortgages, low down payments, long periods of amortization, and subsidized rates of interest, we would not have developed as we have in the United States and Canada. Moreover, these matters of urban development are closely related to the phenomenon of the Civil Rights movement and other aspects of our present social situation which one might place ahead of other elements of change.

Nor can government be held responsible for promoting those fundamental differences in the relationships between parents and children, between husband and wife, between the nuclear family and the elderly survivor, which are so evidently a major part of social change since the 1930's. The phenomenon of the working mother in Western industrial nations can be related directly or indirectly to war-time demands within the labour force more than two decades ago. Yet, since the end of the war the incidence of the employment of married women has increased steadily and in Canada, for example, married women constitute 50 per cent of all employed women and about 12 per cent of the labor force. No one in my country really knows what proportion of employed married women are mothers, nor has anyone published a balanced assessment of the effects of the employment of mothers upon their children and upon family life.

The dilemmas we face in identifying the future role of government, and in considering strategies which have been or might be employed in implementing social change in Western urban nations, become increasingly clear. If the basic elements have been identified correctly, it is certain that our major concerns are not primarily with these factors but with some of the profound consequences that flow from them.

The two most significant aspects of social change that have occupied our minds and our efforts during the past ten years particularly are known loosely as the Civil Rights movement and the War on Poverty. There is danger that social change will become identified solely with these loose concepts. If we can maintain our true perspective, which is the alleviation and removal of persistent poverty in an affluent society, our concern with strategy must be devoted to the orderly direction of the fundamentals in social change towards the attainment of significant social opportunity objectives. Our concern is to promote the acceptance of every person as a human being possessed of worth and dignity, without reference to his race, color, creed nationality, place of birth, sex or age, and to provide a place for him in the mainstream of social and economic development. Legislation and the programs which develop from it are not, therefore, the only consideration. We are concerned, as well, with the minds and hearts of people.

The Problem of Strategy

No essay on the subject of strategy should begin without reference to the greatest student of the subject, Karl von Clausewitz, who wrote "In strategy everything is quite simple, but not on that account very easy". Its apparent or superficial simplicity may well be the fundamental trouble with strategy, which we must define as the art of employing all the resources of a nation to achieve the objects of peace rather than of war. There must be concurrence, therefore, on the nature and priorities of the objectives sought in implementing social change in modern society. It is clear that there is no such concurrence.

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In some communities and for some people the objective is a substantial improvement in the living conditions of "the poor", through vast programs of urban renewal and public housing. In another community and for some it is the attainment of social and economic opportunity for all people without regard to race, creed, or national origin, through the enactment of fair employment and fair accommodation legislation and the resultant programs of enforcement. In some communities it is the attainment of widespread adaptation in the fields of education and recreation to the nature and demands of the future automated society. In other communities it is the elimination of dependence through educational and vocational programs designed to make almost every individual and family self-supporting. And in all communities for some people the objective is to resist social change, if necessary through the application of that other acceptable meaning of strategy, namely, "the use of artifice and sometimes of deceit".

Any examination of the history of the development of strategy in the strictly military sense reveals that there was general agreement on certain principles, which include: the objective, the offensive, co-operation (unity of command), mass (concentration of force), economy of force, manoeuvre, surprise, security, and simplicity.¹ In the modern period these so-called principles have naturally come into serious question and their alleged immutability has been challenged. It has been argued that there is little agreement as to what the principles are, or what they mean; that they overlap; that they are fluid and require constant re-examination; that they are not comparable with scientific law, since no two situations are ever completely alike; that the so-called principles are not really principles at all but merely methods and commonsense procedures adopted by the great leaders of the past; and that changes in the conditions of war alter their relative importance.

These references to the traditional meaning of strategy, and the principles which have been developed by the theoreticians in the military art, do have some interest and relevance for the implementation of social change although, as indicated previously, this venture into semantics carries serious risks. In one sense the use of a phrase like "the war on poverty" is a master stroke; in another sense it is a national disaster. In the American tradition it assumes that we know who "the good guys" and who "the bad guys" are, and that no war has ever been lost. When one talks to a Negro student, however, as I did, about the difficulties he has in persuading his parents that he ought to continue with a university education in the face of their strong view that there is no sense in this, and no hope for successful employment of his educational attainments thereafter, one comes to realize that for many persons no war has ever been really won. In explaining the emergence of a "culture of poverty" Lloyd Chlin has written, "It sets limits on expectations about work, leisure and the good life. It encourages appropriate survival attitudes towards oneself, neighbors and strangers. In short, it promulgates norms of conduct, attitudes and values that define the world of the possible and the acceptable."² My Negro student's father could not conceive of the possibilities for his son, and in any event, could not accept the objective of the son's aspiration.

There are, it seems to me, two significant sets of questions which must be answered before it is possible to engage in full consideration of strategies for implementing social change. In the first place, it is difficult to disagree with Hebert Gans³ that there is much confusion with respect to fundamental objectives in the vast programs of the past four or five years. The real question here seems to be whether we are merely content to accept old goals but to employ new techniques to attain them; or whether we intend to change the very class structure of North American society in the process of attaining the goals. Is it sufficient to accept the oldest goal of all, that of helping the people at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy by mustering our resources to undertake a concerted attack on their problems? Or must we change the basis of our society to attain the objective of offering every person the full opportunity to enter or participate in the mainstream of modern social and economic life?

The second major set of questions which antedate considerations of strategy pertains to the degree of democratic involvement that the individual or the group will insist upon in implementing social change. For Americans it is possible that this is not a question subject to debate; but in British countries, while no question of the fundamental dedication to democratic principles in government arises, there seems to be far more utilization of the political process to attain social change than would be considered wise or even democratic by many Americans. The political and legislative processes required to implement the development of the so-called Welfare State after 1945, and particularly after 1948, will serve as one example; the process of implementing the reorganization of Metropolitan London during the past five years is another example. The creation of metropolitan government in Toronto and Winnipeg are further instances of strong governmental implementation. Let no one delude himself that these are merely forms of political rationalization. They were, and are, a form of social change of a very high order.

On the other hand, the political devices known as the initiative and referendum are peculiarly American and strangely, in retrospect, were developed in the United States as a safeguard against the restrictive practices of British administration exemplified in the colonial period. Today it is entirely conceivable that important aspects of established democratic practice in the United States are anachronistic and antagonistic towards the implementation of social change. It seems incredible that as small a group as 500 persons in California could apply to the state legislature for the creation of municipal governments to be known as "cities". The consequence, ten, fifteen, or twenty-five years later, has been the development of the legion of suburbs surrounding the major Californian cities. Yet there is no power within state or local government to order these municipalities to co-operate in the provision of services which are essential to many programs of planned change. Moreover, the democratic process has served to make the structure of local government rigid to the point where it presents a positive barrier to the implementation of political and social change. Although the end is in itself desirable, the means of attaining metropolitan organization in London and Toronto must seem quite undemocratic to many American students of the subject. Why should it be assumed that the handing down of major decisions from the second level of government is likely to be wise or productive or serviceable to the needs of a rapidly changing society? What would have been the effect if those responsible

for decisions had come down on the side of the status quo? No referendum has been invited, no substantial degree of citizen participation has been welcomed, and yet there has been movement and evident facilitation of change by methods which may be strongly challenged on democratic grounds.

The argument inevitably returns to the terribly difficult problems involved in affecting, adjusting, or altering points of view and attitudes towards difference and deviation which are strongly maintained by members of all groupings in the society, both the minorities and the majorities. It may be possible in many jurisdictions to legislate against and to punish discrimination in employment and housing; it may be virtually impossible to dissipate prejudice on the one hand, and to raise the levels of self-worth and aspiration on the other, in the drive towards a full measure of social opportunity. Serious students of the future automated society have already proposed monetary techniques for providing a modest but adequate standard of living for all, without reference to participation in work. What problems shall we face, however, when work becomes the privilege of a selected few, rather than the right of all?

The Pace of Change

It is certain that the pace of social change, governed by the development of its fundamental components and assisted by man's increasing mobility and the revolution in communications, cannot be firmly controlled and can be slowed or hastened only with great difficulty. When government responds to the rising aspirations and expectations of its citizens with legislation, fiscal resources, and planned programs, the degree of change and its pace, and the extent to which these aspects can be controlled in practice, are extremely important questions in the development of strategy.

Since the decision in 1954 of the United States Supreme Court in Brown vs The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas the matter of pace has been recognized as crucial to the implementation of social change. In the decade following this decision it has become clear that the various contending parties have quite different notions concerning the appropriate rate of speed. Thus, in the Prince Edward County case in 1964, the Court was forced to emphasize that the requirement of desegregation "with all deliberate speed" was not a license to deliberate forever, that ten years was a long enough period of grace, and that further delays would not be countenanced.⁴ For the plaintiffs of 1954 an appropriate speed of change was perhaps a matter of twelve months or less; for the resistors or defendants of the past dozen years a proverbial snail's pace was the main element of strategy, without regard to the law of the land.

The parties arrayed against each other today in depressed neighbourhoods in large cities, and in rural pockets of poverty, are not so easy to identify. In fact the forces of government and community institutions are usually the ones that are striving to motivate those judged to be poor, depressed, or disadvantaged into preparing themselves to take advantage of increasing social opportunities. As far as the speed of change is concerned in these situations, it is the forces of organized society rather than the poor who must restrain an understandable impatience to make substantial gains as quickly as possible. The role of the community development worker or "change agent", or "l'animateur" as he is called in some French-speaking areas, is crucial in determining the appropriate pace of change with respect to the social, economic, cultural and other factors which weigh heavily in the lives of the people he seeks to help.

In July 1965 a number of the writer's colleagues at the University of Toronto paid a flying visit to the headquarters of BAEQ (Bureau d'Aménagement du Québec l'Est - Organization for Community Development of Eastern Quebec) at Mont Joli, in the Gaspe Peninsula. This region, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence as it widens to become the Gulf of St. Lawrence, comprises 16,000 square miles and 325,000 population. Over \$100,000,000 annually is distributed by way of public assistance and transfer payments to maintain its

population. In some sections of the Gaspe between 90 and 100 per cent of the population is maintained by such payments. Unemployment and underemployment are chronic. Many of the younger and more enterprising inhabitants are leaving to seek employment and life elsewhere. It is estimated that during the last 20 years 100,000 people have left the region. Incomes are very low. The average Gaspe fisherman's family income is \$2,500, of which 50 per cent comes from social security programs. In one county per capita income is less than one-half of the national average.

In 1963 the Province of Québec passed enabling legislation and signed an agreement to co-operate with the Government of Canada in implementing the objectives of ARDA (Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Administration of the Federal Department of Agriculture). BAEQ, a new corporation, was then formed to devise a master plan for the development of the Gaspe. This is the largest single project of its kind in Canada, has a budget of \$4,000,000 and will continue for three years. Pertinent sections of the report of the faculty visitors with respect to the pace of change are the following extracts:

BAEQ represents an intensive effort to apply scientific methods through a broad, interdisciplinary research program, to assess total resources and to project plans for their fullest possible development in the interests of a viable economy and the well-being of the people of the area. Research is channelled chiefly along three lines: bio-physical, economic and social. Upon the basis of systematic inventories in all sectors of the economy and discussions by the people through some 200 local community committees and eight zone committees, a master plan will be projected and recommended to the Government of Québec.

Paralleling the research program is a program of "social animation". In many ways this is the unique and most imaginative and strategic part of the total effort. Field workers or "community development workers", now 20 in number, some of them graduate social workers, are deployed throughout the Gaspe to work closely with local committees. Their function is to animate the committees and the people, to spark them into awareness of their situations, to encourage them to examine and discuss the problems they face, to contribute their views to the BAEQ and, through representation in eight committees at the zone level, to react to proposals presented by the BAEQ research and planning staff, and to decide upon which specific, alternative lines of action they would recommend be forwarded to the provincial government for final political action.

What impresses one in visiting Mont Joli, headquarters of the BAEQ, is the youthfulness of the staff (average age is 27 years, the oldest member being 36 years of age), their sophistication (especially in terms of scientific research and technical competence), and their dedication (one senses exhilaration on every hand, something approaching religious zeal in their commitment to the necessity and wisdom of rationalizing economic, social, and political arrangements). A quality of idealism a sense of urgency, a commitment to social and economic justice, permeates the very atmosphere. One gets the impression that these are intensely concerned young men and women who have seen a gleam and who have a new faith in the future.

As a matter of fact, this emphasis on social animation, on attempting to harness the deep discontent of the people and on arousing new aspirations and high expectation, goes far beyond a mere exercise in applied social science. Many of the staff are convinced, as are professional social workers and others who work directly with the people, that if the BAEQ recommendations are not accepted and implemented there may well be quite serious social consequences. Such is the morale and esprit de corps of the BAEQ staff that they are anxious to continue as a kind of Task Force, to move to new locations, and to tackle other similar assignments. Some of the staff go so far as to indicate that, if the government should give any sign of failing to support the plan being formulated for the Gaspe, they would not hesitate themselves to enter the arena of political action.⁵

The social animators of Eastern Quebec are clearly in a great hurry. Their constituents must be motivated quickly; their plans must be accepted quickly by the provincial government. The times are urgent. Justice must be done. The alternatives are serious -- social disaster? revolution? If their recommendations are not accepted and implemented quickly, the animators themselves may be forced to seek political power. They hold that the term "Welfare State" is in contrast to the concept of "true planning". Welfare services are apparently equated with attempts by "The Establishment" to adjust people to the social and economic structure rather than adjust the structure to the needs of the people. Planning, on the other hand, requires the development of a new structure based upon new discoveries in the applied social sciences and social administration as practiced in the underdeveloped nations of Africa and Asia.

On the other hand, the report of a colleague who has recently completed an assignment with UNICEF on the Ivory Coast (the most affluent of the former French colonies in West Africa) conveys an entirely different impression of the role of the social animator. On the Ivory Coast a team of two animators (one male, one female) will travel to a village and take up residence. They may wait several months, perhaps six, before their assistance is requested in such tasks as securing a new water supply by digging a well in an appropriate location, or building some form of community structure, or assisting in the cultivation of a crop through a new technique. Their stance is one of patient reticence until asked for help, and then they proffer advice with the most careful attention to the social and cultural roles of the villagers.

In the first case the pace of change is feverish, one of intense excitement and of commitment to political change, by radical means if necessary. In the second case the pace is slow, deliberate, patient, as if mankind had an eternity in which to introduce all of its people to a higher material standard of living. The first example is consistent with the views of the Chinese and the concept of "the great leap forward". The second example is consistent with the views of the Indians and their concept of village development. Which pace of change is the correct one? The answer is that both are right, in their appropriate place.

Fundamental Differences in Canadian-American Opportunities

Every participant in a conference such as this naturally relies upon his own experience, and most of the examples he cites are likely to be "close to home" in the sense that they are derived from his own metropolitan region, his own state or nation, and in particular from those experiences in which he has been a direct participant. In this case it seems essential that the differences between the American and Canadian backgrounds to social change, in its major dimensions, be explained. Otherwise there is danger that the illustrations might be dismissed with the explanation that one jurisdiction or the other simply does not have the problem.

It is undeniable that Canada does not have a racial problem in the sense that the United States has, where the integration of two major racial groups is a profound aspect of social change requiring strong and continuous concern by government during the last third of the twentieth century. It is true that a few thousand Negroes found their way into Ontario after the Civil War but, in a country of $19\frac{1}{2}$ million persons, Canada now has an estimated Negro population varying between 25,000 and 50,000.⁶ Many of these live in Nova Scotia where, since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, most of our Negro population have been residents. Furthermore, a fair proportion of those who might be termed Negroes in Canada are immigrants from the British West Indies and are unlike the American Negro in both social and cultural characteristics.

These facts are not intended to credit the Canadian nation with any advanced degree of social justice. As John Seeley has pointed out, a problem in inter-group relations often exists, or does not exist, with respect to the presence or absence of a sufficient number and concentration of the so-called minority group.⁷ In 1965 the situation in Canadian metropolitan centres is in part the product of a long and deliberate program of "selective immigration", a modern euphemism for discrimination in that area of national policy. Canadians have been equally adroit in excluding the vast numbers of Indians, Pakistanis, East Indians, Chinese, and Japanese who would migrate to this continent if the carefully drawn immigration legislation were intended to achieve a different objective than that prevailing for nearly 100 years.

An equally important difference between the Canadian and American societies at this time in our history exists in the degrees of political and economic power vested in our various levels of government. During the past decade the Federal Government in the United States has, if anything, grown stronger, and has been able to by-pass the relatively weak state governments by more or less direct negotiations with municipal governments in the achievement of social and economic objectives. In the fields of urban renewal, public housing, metropolitan planning, mass transportation, the federal-municipal partnership is beginning to achieve impressive results. No such partnership is possible, at least in peacetime, between the Federal Government of Canada and the municipal governments, including those of Metropolitan Toronto and Metropolitan Winnipeg. The fact is that during the past decade the Government of Canada has become far less powerful in its relations with the increasingly strong provincial governments. This is not, of course, a political phenomenon which can be explained in terms of one catalyst alone, but if there is one aspect of social change which must be singled out it is the so-called "silent revolution" in the Province of Quebec.

During the past six years the Government of Quebec, which has a population of nearly 6,000,000, has enunciated a new constitutional philosophy based upon the concept of two equal but separate nations, one English and one French, within the Canadian nation. This enunciation sometimes takes the form of the concept of "associate statehood" -- the interesting claim that it is possible for a federal nation to be composed of several provinces encompassing about two-thirds of its population on the one hand and, on the other, harboring within its bosom an associate state which contains one-third of the national population, for the most part of a different cultural background and speaking another language. Whether or not the emergence of Quebec as a vital social, economic, and political force in Canadian life is the major

catalyst, the constitutional assumptions underlying this emergence have struck a responsive note in the minds of eager provincial Prime Ministers. Several have taken advantage of the confused situation to press their claims for a more equitable distribution of tax revenues and for a new pattern of social services. The latter takes the form of a simple doctrine that the second level of government will administer and provide a great many services in the health and welfare field, including hospital insurance, medicare, public assistance, and so on, so long as the federal government transfers sufficient financial resources.

The undoubted strengthening of the provincial governments is perhaps the most significant phenomenon with respect to future governmental promotion and implementation of social change in Canadian life. The more conservative provincial governments have not yet come to realize that the assumption of responsibility for health, welfare, and other social services will bring with it, in due course, an essential role in social change that will either alter fundamentally the traditional policies of the political parties now in existence, or will force their replacement by other groups who understand the consequence of present social and political tendencies.

Moreover, the strengthening of the second level of government has meant the emergence of a rather "hard line" with respect to the "creatures" of these governments, namely, the municipalities. For several decades the leaders of municipal governments have been arguing for a shift in responsibility, particularly in the fields of health, welfare, and education, from them to the wider financial resources at the command of the senior levels of government. Municipal officials have welcomed such changes in the balance of power and responsibility, not only as relief from the pressures of the electorate for relatively stable, or only moderately rising, tax levies, but because they have felt almost completely unable to provide those aspects of municipal living which we might describe as the human services (health, welfare, housing) as against the physical services (water supply, sewerage, arterial roadways, expressways, transportation services).

The import of this brief analysis of the redistribution of political power between the three levels of government in Canada is simply that the provincial governments are in a relatively strong position to promote and implement social change, if they so wish. The case for regional or metropolitan government is perhaps the best illustration for an audience of practitioners and students of social change. It is well known that two of the very few attempts at metropolitan political reorganization in North America have been undertaken in Canada. It is clear to any student of local government that the creation of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto or the political organization known as Metropolitan Winnipeg would not have been possible without the frank exercise of power by a strong second level of government. In American terms this exercise of power was probably undemocratic. In Ontario, for example, a quasi-judicial body known as the Ontario Municipal Board has the power, by provincial statute, to order the annexation of one local government by another, the joining together of various political units for the performance of some service, and even the power to join a number of political units together to create a metropolitan form of government. In the case of Toronto the Board recommended to the Government of Ontario in February 1953 that a metropolitan form of government should be created in the Toronto area and the province responded through the passage of the necessary legislation in April 1953. It is probably true that a referendum giving the then 1,100,000 electors an opportunity to vote in favour of one unitary city, as against an unknown and untried new fourth level of government, would have resulted in an overwhelming vote for one big city. This may have been the verdict during the intervening twelve years and may even be the verdict today.⁸

On balance, the provincial government in its wisdom has decided that there is merit in the perpetuation of local governmental units designed to maintain the gains or benefits which may be a consequence of the provision of services by a government that is "close to the people". This is an interesting juxtaposition of phenomena. On the one hand a strong "state" government can and does order into existence a new level of metropolitan government, which is designed to provide area-wide services through the mustering

of the financial resources of the whole. At the same time, the strong "state" government, through its power over municipal government, remains the champion of citizen participation in government and the bulwark against the creation of one vast unitary system in which, it is often alleged, the citizen can no longer feel himself part of the community. In Winnipeg the Government of Manitoba created not merely a new level of government but carved out a dozen new constituencies each consisting of a geographical slice that ran through the central city and into a portion of the suburban area.

It could be argued that these illustrations are not really aspects of social change. The writer would maintain, on the contrary, that a potential solution to area-wide problems through the creation of a metropolitan form of government is a fundamental aspect of social change. The writer was present at a conference in 1958 when Professor Morton Grodzins, of the University of Chicago, explained why American metropolitan areas were not likely to follow the Toronto model. He did not point out, perhaps because his audience realized it, that no American state has the power of a Canadian province with respect to its municipalities. Grodzins' point was simply this: that American metropolitan areas consisted of a central city which was increasingly composed of elderly residents and of newcomers who were likely to be members of minority groups, non-White, members of large low-income families or single persons predominantly elderly. Democratic at election time, and Roman Catholic; whereas the residents of the suburban areas within the metropolis were likely to be former residents of the central city or newcomers who were not members of minority groups, were white-skinned, small and upper-income families, Republican at election time, and Protestant. He could not see how these widely disparate groups of citizens could emerge their differences within a metropolitan government.

The great Canadian advantage, therefore, is the possibility, and indeed the reality, that the large, low-income, migrant, Liberal, and Roman Catholic families can escape from the central city into the so-called suburban areas. For example, in the heart of the central city of Toronto one can find a Little Italy, with a population of perhaps 100,000 to 150,000 persons, mostly newcomers since 1946. Yet, five or six miles to the north one can also find a large Italian enclave in the midst of a vast suburban area which, since 1949, has been built up rapidly from fewer than 25,000 to more than 350,000 population. Admittedly, these persons are members of the so-called White race. The very few Negroes in Metropolitan Toronto, perhaps 7,500, are also found in some loose sort of enclave in the central city, but, they too, are spread thinly in various suburban neighborhoods. Is this because Canadians are more liberal or more tolerant? No attempt is made here to answer this question, but it is clearly a fact that the major, though not the only, present barrier to the movement of persons in Canada from the central city to suburban areas and vice versa is an economic barrier.

In this context the vital contribution of metropolitan government is the equitable spread of the financial burden involved in the provision of area-wide services to all residents of the metropolitan area. In Toronto this has been accomplished to a large degree in the provision of the physical services; it will be increasingly true, as well, during the next decade, in the provision of the social and educational services. Once this is achieved it will matter less where one lives within the metropolis, and it will matter relatively little what one's ethnic origin or the color of skin might be. It cannot be denied that all of these apparent social opportunities might change radically if the barriers to immigration with respect to the British West Indies, to Hong Kong, to South East Asia, were to be lowered suddenly..

Strategy in Practice

Only five years ago those of us who were active in the newly emerging field of urban studies confined our attention more or less completely to an examination of the social aspects of public housing, slum clearance, and urban renewal programs. In the course of a graduate seminar entitled "Social Aspects of Housing and Community Planning" we rarely discussed the fundamental reasons for the disabilities or disadvantages of those who were the main concern of the so-called "public housers" and of those who seemed to be fated for personal dislocation as a consequence of the newly emerging and popular broad spectrum programs described as urban renewal. In a short span of time all of our concerns have changed with an abruptness that makes one wonder whether one was blind, or conformist, or essentially unconcerned.

The reasons for, and the timing of, this relatively sudden change in interest, and interest in change, on the part of scholars and practitioners are now well known. The publication of John Kenneth Galbraith's The Affluent Society in 1958 might be considered a major point of departure. Many readers of book reviews and other secondary accounts of this work were misled into believing that Galbraith considered poverty to have been all but eliminated in the affluent society. His thesis, on the contrary, was that, while this was the first time in history when virtually everyone was not in poverty, our economic system required a vast investment of social capital to ensure economic growth and employment for a rapidly expanding population.⁹ At about this same time the Ford Foundation and other granting bodies emerged as a major force in plotting the direction of research interest and in stimulating demonstration projects and other attempts to influence the nature and focus of social change as a consequence of the deterioration of the central city in the modern metropolis. But it was the urban interests of the New Frontier and the vigorous young President who was elected just five years ago that provided perhaps the strongest fillip. The prospect of new and progressive housing legislation after eight years of wandering in the wilderness, the prospect of a federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, and a strongly indicated concern of the new administration with the plight of the cities and the inevitability of metropolitan planning and metropolitan governmental organization -- all these stimuli and many more

turned our minds and hearts towards a searching examination of the real issues and the real reasons for the persistence of poverty in the affluent society. The publication of Michael Harrington's The Other America, in 1962, provided the right, if journalistic, text at the right time, with the right sermon for an entire nation and, indeed, an entire continent.

It is hard to realize that the vast number of programs which are now variously in the action, development, planning, or conception stages in more than 150 cities in the United States are literally no more than four years old. The earliest programs, which were for the most part conceived through uneasy alliances of city planners and so-called social planners, were believed to provide the social plan that had been called for in many cities since the end of World War II. The first enthusiasm was thus generated around the notion that social planning had at last come of age. Gans preferred to call these schemes "guided mobility plans", which, he argued, tended to emphasize four major programmatic goals: to extend the amount and quality of present social services to the hard-to-reach lower-class population; to offer new methods of education, especially in the area of job training; to reduce unemployment by re-training and the creation of new jobs; and to encourage self-help, both on an individual and group basis, notably through community participation and neighbourhood organization.¹⁰ These schemes very often included complementary programs in recreation, public health, delinquency prevention, and public housing.

Apparently no particular attention to strategy was required to implement these efforts and to attain these objectives, because social planners had been itching for twenty years to be given an opportunity to demonstrate the efficacy of community organization techniques involving citizen participation in personal, familial, and neighbourhood improvement. Nevertheless, the community organization or anti-poverty programs were possessed of far more enthusiasm than fiscal resources, and it was not until the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964 and the appropriation of \$340 million for community programs that both the early and the more recent efforts reached the stage of action. During the intervening period the emphasis had gradually changed in some communities. The early concern with social aspects of slum clearance and urban renewal, and with the impact of these programs upon minority groups, has been

replaced by a broad spectrum of concern for human resources. It is now recognized that the combination of gross inadequacies within the person, the neighborhood, and the community has deprived a substantial proportion of our population of basic equality in social opportunity. Experimental programs on a very wide range are being attempted to motivate the individual, to modify the environment, and to mitigate the society.

As far as strategy is concerned, the first basic principle, "the objective", has been the source of much confusion within specific communities and within specific programs, and the source of considerable variation from community to community. These are not necessarily calamities. Internal confusion concerning goals is surely a serious matter, but in my view its presence has been overrated. Variation from community to community must surely be anticipated, since the situation in each "campaign" is different: the political structure at the local level may vary in marked degree from place to place; the politics of social change may be very different; and the social and economic level of the population and the degree to which newcomers, and those of a lower class, have entered the central city are matters which inevitably lead to differences in goals, emphases, techniques, and results. When all of this is said, however, the truth is that we really do not know which are the most appropriate points at which to penetrate the cycle of poverty, the culture of poverty, the perpetuation of poverty, in the affluent society -- whatever one may call it. In the language of Churchillian strategy we have not been able to locate "the soft underbelly" of the arx pauperitas.

It should have been expected that even within specific communities there would be serious arguments between those who do and those who do not advocate fundamental attention to the situation of adults in their roles as father and breadwinner and mother and housekeeper. If this is the period of attack, then clearly the emphasis must be on programs of vocational rehabilitation, re-training, job placement, and a general uplifting of the fitness of the disadvantaged males for participation in the increasingly automated industrial society. Yet clearly the problem may involve far more than this, even within this range of concern, in that all of these objectives may not strike down the real enemy -- discrimination in employment, in promotion, in the terms of work, and the opportunity for advancement in the economic sphere.

Also it should have been expected in certain communities, aware of the fact that the educational facilities in the central cities were nearly a century old, antiquated, and dilapidated, that attention should be paid primarily to the educational system and to the children who seem to be victims rather than beneficiaries of its services. If, however, the real enemy is an inadequate educational system, the task of repairing this deficiency is far more complicated than anyone supposed. For the inadequacy in educational services in the central city is part and parcel of the dilemma of metropolitan affairs, namely, the fundamental disabilities and disadvantages of the central city itself in its struggle to survive as a political and social entity. When one notes some of the salient facts concerning New York City -- for example, that expenditures on public welfare have increased from \$183 million in 1954 to \$502 million in 1965; the cost of police protection has increased from \$104 million in 1954 to \$296 million in 1965; the cost of hospitals is up from \$181 million to \$493 million; and the cost of schools has increased from \$319 million in 1954 to \$814 million in 1965 -- the effect is overwhelming.¹¹ One wonders not so much at the increase in costs but whether there are measurable gains resulting from such expenditures in the educational system. Where, indeed, has the money gone? And we must remind ourselves that the population of New York, like that of most major central cities in the United States, declined in absolute terms from 1950 to 1960, and has been relatively stable throughout the past decade.

In the educational sphere the problem is not merely a case of agreement on the inadequacy of the city's educational services but a lack of capacity to remedy the deficiencies. There are serious differences of opinion among those who staff the community action programs, whether as professionals or lay board members, concerning the appropriate point of attack upon the educational disadvantages of the children of poor or deprived families.

There is the school of thought which stresses "cultural deprivation", implying that what is required is not merely better schooling for children but a fundamental change in the climate within the home as a consequence of a radical alteration in the expectation of parents for their children. How this fundamental alteration is to be accomplished in the thinking of parents with perhaps four or five grades of elementary education themselves and a lifetime of fruitless search for employment and housing opportunities is beyond reason. There is another school which considers that the most appropriate approach would be to strengthen the outlook and expectation of secondary school children, particularly with respect to their future educational and vocational possibilities. Yet the evidence indicates that the children of certain minority groups perform at poorer and poorer levels as they proceed through secondary school and that, even if they graduate, they have less chance of securing employment than children of the majority group who have an incomplete high school education.¹² The targets, again, are discrimination in employment and inequality of opportunity, and these are not targets that have been entirely neglected in legislative and educational programs. Strong attempts at compliance have been made through such organizations as SCAD in New York State and the Human Rights Commission in Connecticut. Now there are more than 30 jurisdictions among the 50 American states and 10 Canadian provinces, which have legislation in the field of human rights. One has the distinct impression, nevertheless, that these efforts are akin to the use of a peashooter against an armored column.

There are also numerous programs which seek to provide better legal resources and aid to so-called poor families on the assumption that the basic evil is the denial of rights to those who are economically disadvantaged, either because they do not understand their rights and privileges or because they cannot afford legal assistance. To an outsider, however, it is incredible that the approach taken in some community action programs has assumed the form of litigation against public welfare officials, school boards and their administrators, local elected and appointed officials, and the like. Surely it could have been anticipated that the mounting tide of protest would be met with an equally strong reaction when many persons who have

dedicated their lives and devoted themselves, wisely or unwisely, to the task of providing some form of social service have been challenged, not on the basis of incompetence but on the basis of lack of regard for human worth and the denial of basic opportunity to vast numbers of children. In one interpretation these charges may be well founded; in another, they may be the wrong assault on the wrong enemy. The consequences of this approach have apparently been serious and almost disastrous to such programs as Mobilization for Youth.

Officials of the community action programs argue, on the other hand, that no law suits were initiated against individual persons as such. Action was taken, rather, to obtain fair hearings for clients of the public social services and, through legal action, to enjoin agencies to follow their own rules. They demanded that the Department of Public Welfare, for example, follow its own manual; they demanded that the Board of Education suspend students in accordance with its own rules. These strategies, it is argued, are particularly immune to official objection. Moreover, the action specialists believe that they have to run the risk that the community action agencies might be damaged, or even destroyed. If such risks are not involved, they imply, the program itself may not be worth the effort. And in any event they emphasize that MFY did survive.

In this exposition it is neither essential nor possible to deal with the several major community programs which deserve special attention: MFY in New York; ABCD in Boston; CPI in New Haven; the Woodlawn Experiment in Chicago; Associated Agencies and the Inter-Agency Project in Oakland. Nevertheless, Mobilization for Youth was the prototype for many of the later developments, not merely because of its early inception and relevant experience, but because it was conceived, developed, financed, and implemented in the midst of a multitude of favorable portents. It was launched by the President himself on May 31, 1962, with the assistance of the first demonstration award under the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Control Act, to mount a systematic, three-year attack on juvenile delinquency.¹³ Public and private grants totalling \$13,200,000 were assembled. Moreover, its conception was thoroughly rooted in a sound theoretical formulation expounded in a 617-page

Proposal for the Prevention and Control of Delinquency by Expanding Opportunities.¹⁴ The "opportunity theory" of Professors Cloward and Ohlin is too well known to require elaboration. It is sufficient to emphasize that the breadth and variety of efforts in the fields of work, education, community development, services to individuals, families and groups, legal services, and in research have never previously or since been matched. The example and experience of MFY have been of enormous guidance in both the United States and Canada.

From the point of view of strategy, the great difficulties experienced in attempts to organize low-income families and individuals to develop and eventually to assume political power are of prime importance. This effort in many communities may be related to Professor Cloward's stress upon "involvement of the poor" and the absorption of this concept in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. It is reasonable to suggest that social work's greatest successes with social reform came before World War I, and were achieved with little or no involvement of the poor. If the experience of 1930's is cited as a partial refutation of this assertion, it would have to be argued that it was the war begun in 1939 which pulled the United States out of the depression and not the process of social and economic reform. Soon thereafter social work education became graduate, professional and, in many places, clinical. From these bases the return in the 1960's to social and political action in partnership with clients has been rough indeed.

The community action agencies quickly learned that their plans of political protest were strongly opposed by organizations and agencies with established reputations and influence. Thus, by 1964 Mobilization for Youth came under severe attack -- accompanied by appropriate and adequate smoke screens -- in the press and in local government. The agency was forced to submit to an investigation, to closer supervision of its activities, and to the virtual emasculation of its militant programs. In March 1965 a new Executive Director was chosen from the top echelons of the National Association of Social Workers. A short while earlier the New York Times devoted an editorial to the new appointment and stated, in part: "He will bring to the embattled agency vigor, imagination, and warm human sympathies, tempered by sound judgment and broad experience."¹⁵

Was this intended to suggest the absence of these qualities during the previous two years in an organization of 400 employees and an annual budget of approximately \$5 million?

Gans has offered the following explanation of the open conflict of 1964 and its aftermath, although he does not intend to limit its relevance to MFY:

The opposition to community organization and advocacy (legal aid) programs is easily explained. Through these programs the action agencies have encouraged and helped their clients to fight city hall and the larger power structure, and to demand changes in the allocation of public funds, the quality and distribution of public services, and the distribution of political power generally. By power structure, or what some action agency officials call the Establishment, I mean the network of alliances between city hall, the political parties, the established welfare agencies, and school board and other municipal agencies, and interest groups like the down town business community, neighborhood merchant groups, realtors, landlords and the like. In most cities, these groups do not form a permanent or organized power structure, but frequently some of them band together to defend their interests, or they do so individually by appeals to city hall.

When the action agencies began to take over traditional functions of established agencies, or set up substitutes for them, or otherwise threatened powerful interests, these fought back by putting pressure on the action agencies. Since city hall and individual elements in the power structure usually participated in setting up the action agencies in the first place, and dominate their Boards of Trustees, they had no real difficulty in demanding a halt to political activities or to any others that stepped on influential toes.¹⁶

Someone has defined a dictatorship as "a country where they have taken the politics out of politics". The danger of ignoring political realities has apparently been well recognized in some communities, notably in New Haven. The strategy of change in that much-admired city is, in the view of the Executive Director of Community Progress, "the imaginative -- courageous -- use of political power. Change in New Haven, for whatever it is worth, is a product of the political system. It was politicians who originated the process. It is politicians who sustain it. And it will be politicians who will secure it."¹⁷ There is, of course, far more to the New Haven experience of the past decade (New Haven antedates the New Frontier and the War on Poverty by nearly five years) than the use of the political process, although it is almost a classic illustration of the value of the "strong mayor system". The major strategical imperatives have included: operation, wherever possible, through existing institutions; deliberate courting of success in the early stages by concentrating on those who have the best chance, once helped, of helping themselves -- "creaming", if you will; creation of a climate where "those in the system who do want to change are not forced to fight the system in order to do so"; careful planning as a means but not as an end in itself; and, a strategy of gradual change and "of recognizing that there is a point beyond which the tolerance of the community will not permit you to go".¹⁸

Emerging Principles

Another anonymous wit has allegedly written that "All reforms start at the bottom. Nobody ever heard of a man with four aces calling for a new deal". One might add that no one has heard of the man with a pair of deuces being granted a new deal by the man with four aces, unless the latter were convinced that the deck was stacked. Our major task ahead is to establish that this is so. Nevertheless, this is a gross over-simplification of the problem and the solution.

In both our countries the clearly stated objective is the provision of equality of social and economic opportunity to all citizens. Throughout history one of the "great equalizers" has been violence, but it is a lesson of history that violence or the threat of violence has frequently led to oppression rather than freedom and equality. Moreover, the major revolutions have been planned, organized, and executed by very small groups in the first instance. They have not necessarily had the support of the mass of people whom they allegedly set out to help. Sometimes support was quickly forthcoming; at other times it was withheld, and one group or regime was soon replaced by another. It is a moot question whether great social change can be or should be accomplished only with the fundamental involvement of those who are assumed to be the beneficiaries.

The prior question for the development of strategy is whether the objective can be attained through amelioration of the individual and the family or through a fundamental alteration in social structure. The question is deliberately posed as an either/or proposition to make it entirely clear that the answer lies in both approaches undertaken simultaneously. The ameliorative approach is of no lasting value without a basic social revolution; changes in the structure are of no real value unless offered to a population willing and able to take advantage of them, consistent with the individual's physical and intellectual capacity. Can these pincers be brought into proper focus in sufficient time to avert disillusionment and further violence?

Our consideration must return to the matter of "pace of change". The inculcation or restoration of individual capacity to grasp social and economic opportunities at a certain level may be rapid for some persons but for others it will be a matter of years. In the United States, moreover, the problem that is basic to a great many superficial difficulties is only now being faced openly in discussion, that is, the disintegration of family life among Negroes. Public discussion of this subject seemed taboo until the President faced it squarely in a recent address (June 1965) at Howard University when he stated. "Perhaps most important -- its influence radiating to every part of life --

is the breakdown of the Negro family structure." If there is anyone who believes that this matter, which is in part a heritage of slavery and "a century of oppression and hatred and injustice" (to quote the President), can be remedied in less than several generations, let him stand forth to receive the just acclaim of genius or the scorn accorded to fools.

As argued previously, even this basic amelioration is undesirable and, indeed, unattainable without fundamental changes in society. The Russians and the Chinese are quick to insist that they have brought their societies from the eighteenth to the twentieth century in less than fifty and twenty-five years respectively. It may well be suspected that North American society will require far longer to move from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, unless we accept the totalitarian definition of "movement". It is one thing to move from a feudal base to an industrial society with the assistance of modern technology; it is an entirely different matter to instil, by democratic process, social and economic equality within an already developed society.

There is much agreement in recent literature on the necessity for the American poor (including the American Negro particularly) to seek and attain political power. It is not enough, however, to attain the vote and to use it in concentration, as many groups do, to reward friends and to punish enemies. It is essential to develop what Wilson has called "influence resources commensurate with their objectives."¹⁹ This surely calls for continued stress upon reapportionment within the States (in Canada, redistribution of constituencies) and pressure for viable forms of metropolitan government. Canadians of French descent, by contrast, who make up most of the population of the Province of Quebec, have not been without political power during the past century, but in a dominant rural society they exercised power primarily to maintain and preserve their cultural and spiritual heritage. After 1960, when a new government chose to emphasize the right to full political and economic equality for French-speaking Canadians, the power of a province which sends 75 of the 265 members to the Federal Parliament was clearly available to gain these new objectives.

The impact of accelerated social change and of the increasingly strong role of government upon social work and social work education have scarcely been explored. There are clearly profound implications for the profession and the schools of social work, not merely with respect to past theories and assumptions concerning human behaviour but also with respect to the need for and use of professionally trained and sub-professional personnel in community programs in which the aspiration and motivation of vast numbers of disadvantaged children, youths, and adults are central to the realization of objectives. In reading about the difficulties in the economic opportunity programs in various cities, one wonders whether the problem is simply that the community organizers or community action specialists have not been sufficiently well trained in social work practice with individuals and groups, or whether the social work practitioners are woefully lacking in their understanding of the principles of community organization. In the Province of Quebec, for example, there is much disillusionment with the capacity of professionally trained social workers to effect significant social change. As a consequence, it is the social scientists who have been provided with the status and the resources to implement programs and to undertake evaluative research. At the same time the schools of social work have been unable to obtain the federal and provincial financing required for rapid expansion to meet the demands of prospective students. The province is emphasizing the training of sub-professional "welfare workers".

Our early exultation at the appropriation of the word "war" to affirm our determination to attain social and economic, rather than military objectives has now been dissipated in the sober experience of harsh reality. We had rejoiced in the expectation that the single-minded devotion of resources and the unity of national purpose, which appear to characterize military struggle, would materialize in the fulfilment of the "great society".

Perhaps they will. It is undeniable, however, that the social services in the modern metropolis were and are grossly ill prepared to meet the demands of the changing population in the inner city, and could scarcely be relied upon in the emerging new programs of deliberate social change. Their sectarian bases, their unitary function, their specialized character, and their lack of mobility are all serious disadvantages in the implementation of a "war on poverty". In the meantime it would be well to recall, in the current circumstances, one of the most appropriate home-grown homilies -- General Sherman's forthright assertion that "War is hell!"

(Note: This paper was prepared for Columbia School of Social Work Arden House Conference on "The Role of Government in Promoting Social Change", Harriman, New York, November 18-21, 1965)

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